

REMARKS

In the aforementioned Office Action, the Examiner issued a restriction requirement, dividing the claims into two groups consisting of claims 1-8 and claims 9-23 respectively. Applicants believe that, although an election of claims 1-8 was apparently done without traverse by prior counsel, a clarification of the claims would have all together obviated this restriction and election. In particular, the verification of a code (as recited in claim 1) and the generation of a code (as recited in claims 9-23) are conceptually and practicably inseparable in that verification is, in large measure, the reverse of the code generation. If the generation and verification were not comparable the verification would not work. So, it is pointless (without utility) to have code generation of code which is not going to be verified or deciphered; and the boundaries set by the restriction requirement tend to produce this very result.

Notwithstanding, claims 23 have been cancelled without prejudice or surrender of any subject matter, and new claims 24-70 have been added to further point out and distinctly claim aspects of the invention. Claims 1-8 have been amended to more clearly recite aspects of the invention. Accordingly, claims 1-8 and 24-70 are now pending.

The specification has been amended to render it consistent throughout and with the drawings (see, e.g., Figures 15 & 16). Support for the amendments herein may be found throughout Applicants' disclosure as originally filed and no new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

In the above-mentioned Office Action: claims 1-8 have been objected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,996,997 to Kamille. Kamille, however, does not support this claim rejection, as will be explained below. In particular, Kamille does not anticipate nor does it enable claims 1-8.

For example, claim 1 now recited an offline-online points system that includes

a main server configured for providing a user with an interface to submit a code, wherein the code is obtainable offline and is associated with N points, wherein each point, characterized as a purchase or attention incentive point, is redeemable and maintainable in an account for the user; and

a code server configured for maintaining valid codes and verifying that the code submitted by the user is a valid code such that a balance in the account for the user is increased by a predetermined number of points if the code is a valid code.

By contrast to the recitations of claim 1, Kamille does not recite terms such as “server”, “interface”, “points”, “account”, or “balance”. Indeed, Kamille, unlike the offline-online points system of claim 1, discloses a probability game system for redeeming a validated game piece on which there is a winning value indication (see, e.g. Figures 1-4C, abstract, and col. 12, lines 15-41). Kamille does not accumulate points in return for a valid code submission nor does it maintain an account of redeemable points, characterized as a purchase or attention incentive points. Once Kamille’s winning value is exposed on the game piece and the winning value is redeemed, assuming the game piece has been validated, the game piece is no longer valuable. The points in the present invention are accumulated once the code is validated and redeemable at some point in the future.

Consistent with the accumulation of points in a user account, as recited in claims depending from claim 1, e.g., claims 2-4, the offline-online points system of claim 1, further includes a user database. The database is configured for holding the account for the user, wherein the balance of the account is M points prior to the user’s submission of the code and is M+N points once the code is validated. By contrast, Kamille does not disclose a database nor does it disclose the addition of N points to the balance, M, of a user account once the code is validated, so that the balance increases to M+N points. Indeed, Kamille does not even mention the terms “account” or “balance” and such terms cannot be attributed to Kamille.

In other words, Kamille does not teach or suggest the claimed invention as recited in claims 1-8. Moreover, the disclosure in Kamille does not provide any enabling description for producing the claimed invention (see, e.g., col. 3, lines 18-35, col. 5, lines 30-47, and col. 12, lines 15-41)

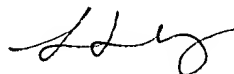
Accordingly, claims 1-8 are allowable over Kamille, and in view of this, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections. Moreover, by analogy, new claims 24-70 are allowable over the cited reference. Thus, as the application is believed to be ready for allowance, a Notice of Allowance of these claims is hereby respectfully requested.

Authorization is hereby given to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to deposit account 50-2778. Should any matter remain unresolved or if any question remains

unanswered the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned Applicant's attorney at (650) 813-4873.

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Respectfully submitted



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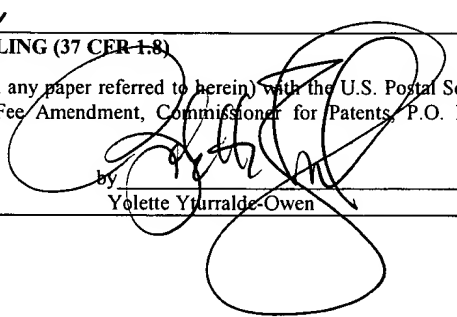
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by
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